The Myrtle.

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13.

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Sewing.

CLOSE by the window there sits to-day
A dear little maiden,—her name is Rose;
And her thoughts are out with the birds at play,
And her needle drags through the seam she sews.
The thread provokes her, beyond a doubt;
It knots and snarls; and the needle tries
To murder her patience out and out,
For it pricks her finger "O dear!" she cries.

I see the trouble she cannot see:
The witches are playing their pranks with Rose;
They dance around her in sportive glee,
And oh, how they laugh at her tearful woes!
They twitch the thread as it leaves her hand,
They knot and tangle and twist it wrong;
And poor little Rose cannot understand
Why her sewing-hour should be so long.

"I don't mind sewing on rainy days,"
Said the restless Rose; "but it seems to be
A cruel thing to give up my plays
When all out-doors is enticing me!
This seam can wait, but my heart rebels,
And longs to carry me far away
To the woods, to the beach where I gather shells;
Oh, how can I work when I want to play!"

A bird leaned hard on the rose's stem,
And bent the bud till it fanned her cheek;
And Rose, through her tears, looked out at them,
And fancied she heard them softly speak.
"If I were you, little girl," they said,
"I would hurry and finish what I'd begun,
And keep my mind on that bit of thread,
Nor think of play till the work was done!"

She smiled through her tears, and she bent her head,
And plied her needle with haste and skill;
"I'll put my heart in my work," she said,
"And that will help me; I know it will!"
I saw the fairies she could not see;
They polished the needle, and smoothed the thread,
And danced around her in sportive glee,
And the sewing-hour was quickly sped.

Our Young Folks.

For the Myrtle.

Aunt Kitty's Teachings.

IT was again holiday at Aunt Kitty's, and the children had gathered for a chat before tea. Their minds reverting to a former occasion, when they had been so interested about the "good Fenelon," brought them to think and speak of the France of the present day. The tender hearts of the little girls bled for the poor children who had suffered during the war, the sad accounts of which had been read to them from the papers by their mammas, from time to time.

"O auntie! is not the war worse now than any they ever had?" asked Susie.

"My dear child, every fresh war seems worse than the last; but to us who value the blessings of peace, war is truly horrible at all times."

Ned and Charlie, wishing to show the younger ones that they had read history, now contested the point, Charlie maintaining that it could never be worse than when Queen Marie Antoinette was executed, and her little boy, the "Dauphin," so brutally treated.

Ned said it was bad enough then, but it was worse when King William lay about the beautiful city of Paris with his army; and that it had been far worse ever since after they had withdrawn, for there was nothing but strife among themselves, and new horrors were added every day.

"I quite agree with Ned as to the latter," said

Aunt Kitty, "and that the fighting which seems to be *against* hearths and homes, not *for* them, is the most disastrous of all; and so regardless of human life are they that even their tender little ones are dragged into the vortex. Indeed, I am sorry to say there have been many instances of the sad fate of young children throughout the war. You, my dears, to whom Christmas has been such a delightful season, can scarcely fancy what it was in that unhappy land. Instead of the usual treat of bonbons, just think of a shower of bombshells for some of the little innocents, who went to bed on the eve of that blessed day hoping for a happy morrow, and who were killed by the shells bursting into their houses, happily before they could awake to know what it all meant. Indeed, I have read of such things when the Prussians were in their city, and in the beginning of the war, before they fought on French ground, one of the first victims was a little girl who was playing with her doll behind a hedge, and happened to be within range of the bullets. There is a sad story told in one of the English papers of a Madame Bonne, who in the first troubles had made her escape from Paris at the risk of her life, and, getting safely to London, had there kept a milliner's shop in the West End, noted for its tasteful decorations. After the siege was over she succeeded in going back, and just as she gained the door of her house with her little boy in her arms, was shot down, I suppose by one of her own countrymen."

Jenny and Susy were both horror-struck.

"And her dear little boy"—

Aunt Kitty now thought it time to show the other side of the picture.

"Let us not dwell too long on these scenes, for we know that though the sufferings of these dear children were short, their blessedness will be long. Yes, the good Lord has indeed provided for these little ones of his kingdom—more than wish. We must only think of them now as the peculiar care of the angels, trained in all that is wise and lovely, and beholding the face of the Father in heaven. Could we now see them, they would no doubt appear to us in a delightful garden, surrounded with all that can make happy and where no evil dwells. With such thoughts no mother can grieve long for the loss of her darlings."

Charlie said he was glad to think of this, for he had read of such dreadful accounts in his book of wars about the babies being dashed against the walls by their cruel conquerors.

The thoughtful mind of Mary was now at work about a text over which she had been long perplexed, and which had again appeared in the morning's lesson; and she quoted a verse from the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm: "O daughter of Babylon, happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

"Do, dear auntie, tell us what it means."

"I am glad, my child, that you have asked, for it caused me much trouble when I was young like you, and you must not have a wrong idea of its meaning. But what do you say yourself, Mary? Do you think it would be right?"

"It would not be right to dash little babies against the stones, and no one would be happy who did it."

"O Mary, we all know that the good Father would not say 'blessed' to those who did such savage acts."

They all exclaimed, "It cannot, cannot be!"

"My darlings, it has a far different meaning; and hard as it seems, it can teach us all a good truth. I suppose the 'little ones' are not little children at all."

"Then what is it?" asked the boys.

"Ah! have you not all 'little ones' that are dear to you—little sins, I mean—and have we not all 'darling sins' which grow and increase daily if not overcome?"

"I know what you mean, now," said Ned. "In us boys it might be swearing, lying, bad habits of any kind."

"Or perhaps," said Charlie, who was always willing to confess his faults, "not helping the afflicted."

"You have just guessed it," replied Aunt Kitty; "and, in fact, it is anything which promotes our selfishness. And would it not be well, while they are 'little ones,' to seek aid to dash them against the 'rock of divine truth,' whereby they may become bruised and powerless to harm? This, with the heavenly influence, we can all do; and thus, 'Happy shall he be who dasheth these little ones against the stones.'"

THE last, best fruit which comes to late perfection, even in the kindliest soul, is tenderness toward the hard, forbearance toward the unforbearing, warmth of heart toward the cold.

For the Myrtle.

A Letter About Birds.

DEAR COUSIN LUCY: You wanted me to tell you about the birds, because, you say, you do not see many in the city, and have no one to tell you stories about them. Well, though I see a great many, I do not know much about them, and very little, I am afraid, that you would like to hear. I wish I had some book on *ornithology* — as they call the books that tell you everything about birds — and I would send it to you.

Of all the birds about here, or that I ever saw, I love robins the best. I do not think them the handsomest, for the Baltimore oriole is a great deal handsomer than the robin, and so is the blue-bird, and the red-headed wood-pecker, and the bobolink, and the yellow-hammer, as we call it. Nor are the robins so cunning as some other birds; but they come and build their nests very near the house and are very tame. And then they sing so sweetly early in the morning, just as soon as it is daylight, and very often again when the sun is going down at evening. We have two nests here, one in the large apple-tree just back of the house, and the other in the elm in front of it. In one nest there are four beautiful eggs, all blue, and in the other there are three young ones; and you would laugh to see them, they are such odd, awkward-looking little creatures, with scarcely any feathers, and great heads and long necks. When the mother comes with worms or bugs to feed them, they all stretch up their necks as far as possible, and open their mouths wide and take whatever she gives them. It is funny enough to see them, and the old ones are not afraid of me at all, and let me look on as much as I please.

But I was going to tell you about swallows, and not robins. We have a great many swallows about the barns, and they are merry fellows, you had better believe. They build their nests of mud and straws which they manage to stick up under the eaves, or on the sides of the rafters under the roof. It takes them some time to make a nest, for they have to go somewhere and find mud and then bring it in their bills, a mouthful at a time; for you see they keep no horse and cart, and have not even a wheelbarrow. When they get their nest made they put hair and feathers inside and make it very nice and comfortable. Swallows have very long wings and short necks and broad heads, and though their bills are quite short, they have very wide mouths; and you will think that must be very convenient, when I tell you that they take all their food when they are flying. They eat flies and flying bugs and millers, or moths and mosquitos, and all such things; and what is funny is, that when we see them flying about as merry as crickets and almost as noisy, and think them at play, they are hard at work, just "to make a living." I do not know whether they think it is sport, but I guess they do, just as men go hunting or fishing, and call it sport; though it sometimes is harder work than to get in hay or hoe corn.

Last year, when we ploughed up our strawberry field, the swallows had a fine time. It was a damp, chilly day, and the field was full of white millers that had got down among the plants and weeds to keep out of the wind, I suppose; but when the horses went tramping along, the poor millers had to fly for their lives or be trodden down and ploughed under. The swallows were not long in seeing them, and I guess every swallow on the farm turned out for the sport. The field seemed to be full of them, and as soon as a miller rose in sight one of them darted at him, and he was gone in an instant. They minded nothing about the horses, or John, who was ploughing, but flew about them in every way, and sometimes right under the horse's belly and almost between John's arms and legs. I suppose they thought it was Thanksgiving or Fourth of July, and that all these millers were scared up just to make them a feast.

But that did not please me nearly so much as it did to see them catch mosquitoes one day. I do not love mosquitoes much, and was glad to see the swallows pick them up. The men were pulling pie-plant, and as I stood at the top of the field I could see a great many mosquitoes in the sunlight as they moved about in their work. The swallows saw what was going on, and were on the ground in force at once. It was fun for me to see them dart across the line of light that made the mosquitoes visible, and the poor things vanished as they passed. It kept them busy for hours, and I hope they found mosquitoes fine eating. I have loved swallows the better for it ever since.

B. G. R.

For the Myrtle.

A Child's Prayer.

My Saviour, at thy gracious throne
I bend a willing knee;
Oh, never leave my soul alone,
But keep me near to Thee.

Through all my childhood's sunny years
I've found my wants supplied;
And Thou, amidst life's thousand snares,
Hast ever been my guide.

Still keep my wayward spirit right,
Each sinful thought subdue;
Cause me to live with heaven in sight,
With Thee, my God, in view. *R. C. W.*

SLEEP is death's youngest brother, and so like him that I never dare trust him without my prayers.

MEN left without restraint to the indulgence of their lusts and passions, become the tormentors and destroyers of one another.

One Drop of Evil.

"I don't see why you won't let me play with Will Hunt," pouted Walter Kirk. "I know he does not always mind his mother, and smokes cigars, and once in a while swears just a little. But I have been brought up better than that; he won't hurt me. I should think you would trust me. I might do him some good."

"Walter," said his mother, "take this glass of pure, clear water, and put just one drop of ink into it."

"O mother! who would have thought one drop would blacken a whole glass so!"

"Yes, it has changed the color of the whole; has it not? It is a shame to do that. Just put a drop of clear water into it, and restore its purity."

"Why, mother! you are laughing at me. One drop, nor a dozen, nor fifty, won't do that."

"No, my son; and therefore I cannot allow one drop of his evil nature to mingle with your purity."

For the Myrtle.

A Story About a Squirrel.

ONCE upon a time, a little gray squirrel had made a home among the rocks of a high cliff which overlooked the sea. He was a very pretty squirrel, with his soft, glossy coat, nice bushy tail, and wee shining black eyes, and was very good and industrious too. He would go down to the beach, and gather the prettiest shells, and with these he paved the entrance to his home, so that it was very beautiful to see; and he made it very cosy within, and he thought it was the nicest, pleasantest little home that ever a squirrel had, and in it he had spent many happy days.

In the spring time he went each day to the neighboring forest to greet the little wild flowers, and the birds, the bees and the butterflies on their return to the dreamy old wood. When the summer days came, he played at "hide and seek" with the waves among the rocks, or, peeping his head out of his little doorway, would watch the clear blue sky. Then in the harvest time he must go to the wood to bring home the ripened nuts which must be stored away for future use, and also to say "good-by" to his forest friends; then perhaps in the long, dreary winter he might have been lonesome, but he did not say anything about it, only sat and ate his sweet nuts, or dreamed and dreamed while the waves outside sang weird songs or laughed loudly and merrily.

It was just the time when the reapers were bringing home the last of the sheaves, when the squirrel went into the forest to bring away a pile of nuts which he had gathered and left near the stump of an old tree. He had been many days getting these nuts together, and he felt very glad that the work was all done, because he wished to get them into his little home before the sharp frost should come to bite them.

It was in the morning, and the sun was shining and the dew was sparkling on all the flowers, as he ran on blithesomely along the mossy stones and over the withered leaves that shivered and sighed in every nook and crevice. Sometimes he would stop to climb a favorite tree, and then would rush down again as fast as he could. He saw his friend Goldenrod drying her yellow hair in the breeze, and she nodded her head and smiled, and the squirrel nodded and smiled too. The cardinal flowers threw on their scarlet hoods and came out to see the squirrel and to say good-by to him, for they expected to go away on the morrow; so he chatted with them a while, then hurried on till he came to the spot where he had left his nuts. Poor little squirrel! he looked around, but could not see them anywhere. All the leaves about the old stump were piled up into hillocks beside it, and all the pretty red moss which had made it look so beautiful was gone too. "Who could have taken my nuts?" thought the squirrel, as he sorrowfully gazed at the ruin about him. "Who could have taken my nuts?"

The old wood seemed suddenly to have grown very dark to the squirrel, and though the great trees sent down showers of leaves all crimson and brown and gold, yet he took no notice of them, nor did he seem to hear the sound of the dropping nuts, which before had been so pleasant to his ears. He turned sadly away from the spot, hardly knowing what to do or where to go; but hope whispered to him that perhaps his friends might tell him something about them.

He saw a lizard which had crept out from under a big stone and was lazily sunning himself

once more; and he called to him, "Have you seen anything of my nuts, friend lizard?" But the lizard only opened his sleepy eyes a little wider and looked up and winked at the sun, then shut his eyes as tight as he could, and would not say a single word; so the squirrel left him there to dream. He could not ask the birds, for they had all flown away, and nearly all the flowers had gone too; but perhaps Goldenrod might know, for she had travelled about the country, and was very wise; so he went on as fast as he could, and in his haste stumbled over an old blind mole, who called out to him, "Where are you going so fast, my friend? Can you not stop one moment?"

Then the squirrel told him about his nuts, and the mole looked very wise and said very slowly, "I think the children must have taken your nuts."

"The children!" said the squirrel. "What should the children want of my nuts — can they not get them for themselves? No, they would not take my nuts, I am sure."

Then the old mole said, "You may think what you please, but I *know* that the children have taken them; for once they took me and were going to carry me away with them, but I was so blind and so still and so very stupid that they were soon tired of me, so they left me here."

But the squirrel could hardly believe it yet; so he ran on till he saw Goldenrod, and to her he repeated his story and said, "Do you think the children have taken them, Goldenrod?"

Then she said, "Some children passed this way this morning, and they stopped here to admire me. One carried on his arm a little basket, and when he opened it I looked in, and it was filled with nuts; and they were talking and wondering whether it would be right to keep them. One thought they ought to take them back; but I do not know whether they did, for they left me and began to gather the bright-colored leaves."

Then the squirrel felt that it must have been the children who had taken his nuts, and he was afraid he should never get them. Then he thought he must go to work and gather some more. "But what if the children should take them again!" he thought; and he grew more and more sad as he neared his little home, and it was the saddest night he ever passed in it. But when the morning came his heart grew lighter. He ran swiftly to the wood, straight to the old tree, and the first thing he saw was his nuts all piled up carefully.

Then the squirrel ran up the tree and frisked about, and did everything a squirrel can do when he is delighted, and he thought, "How good the children are!" Then he took the nuts home, and it seemed when he came to eat them that no nuts had ever tasted so sweet to him as these.

The waves seemed to laugh and sing all night and all day, and the squirrel was happy in his home in the rocky cliff. The children were happy too; and when the hazy autumn days came again they went often into the old forest and gathered nuts, but the squirrel always found his untouched.

Daisy's Prayer.

DARLING little Daisy,
With her golden hair,
Sitting at the table
In her own high chair.

Closed the dewy eyelids
Over blue eyes bright;
Drooped the golden lashes
Over cheeks so white.

Bent above the table,
Little head so fair;
Daisy s supper's waiting
Till she says her prayer.

So she clasps her fingers
As when wont to pray;
"Oh, dear me!" sighs Daisy,
"What does papa say?"

Lower bows her forehead
O'er the table then;
And she whispers softly, —
"Jesus' sake. Amen."

Darling little Daisy,
With your winsome face,
May the blessed Saviour
Daily give his grace!

May you never venture
Any path to take,
Till you ask God's blessing
For dear Jesus' sake!

When the light of childhood
Shall have left your brow,
May your faith in Jesus
Be as pure as now!

From all sin and wandering
Keep your footsteps free!
And, at last, with Jesus
May you ever be!"

GRATITUDE is the memory of the heart.

A Large Orphans' Home.

Nearly thirty-six years ago, Mr. George Muller commenced the work of looking after orphans and providing for them, in the city of Bristol, England. Since then, up to the present time, he has erected five buildings, at a cost of $532,400, and can now accommodate two thousand children. He receives orphans from all parts of Great Britain, and the funds for the institution come from all parts of the civilized world.

One of the most remarkable facts connected with this institution is, the way in which it is sustained. Mr. Muller calls his work a work of faith. He asks no one for assistance, and in most cases he knows not the names of those who contribute to his institution. He believes that the institution is sustained in answer to his prayers for it. He says of his supplies in money, "I have simply in answer to prayer, and without application to any one, obtained for this work $2,081,200." With this money nearly seventeen thousand children have been fed, clothed and taught; ninety-five thousand copies of the Bible and the New Testament, and thirty thousand copies of smaller portions of the Scriptures, and thirty millions of tracts, have been given away. This is a remarkable institution, and deserves the thought of all who have read or heard of it.

The Consumptives' Home in this city is an institution started and supported in the same way.

As specimens of the letters which Mr. Muller receives with his donations, we give the following: "£50 as a thank-offering for an enormous crop of wheat." "£20 saved in one year by not smoking cigars." "£1 11s. 6d., saved by not going to a public dinner," from X. Y. Z. "£5, the produce of the sale of one thousand cocoanuts, in remembrance of a visit to the orphan houses," from Tobago, West Indies.

Two Things Wanted.

Two things we very much want for the MYRTLE now and all the time.

One is — good Bible Enigmas for our "Hidden Seed" department. Our little friends have noticed that we do not wait to publish their names with answers, now that our paper comes so often, but give all answers on the following week. But we trust that will prevent none of our bright little students of the Bible from finding these "hidden seeds" — a recreation which instructs while it amuses — nor from *hiding* seeds for the benefit of other little students like themselves. That is a way to work for the Sunday Schools which many a one may follow who has had a desire to "do something" for the cause and has found no way. Do not let a good enigma be lost, but send them to the MYRTLE, and so become Sunday School teachers all.

The second want is — good recitations and dialogues for concerts. The Sunday Schools we saw in vacation-time begged of us to help them find things for their concerts and exhibitions — "Do put some good dialogues in the MYRTLE." *We* said, "Do help us to find good dialogues to put in." And so say we now. Whoever invents any little exercise of any kind for his or her own school, please not hide it under *that* bushel, but let the MYRTLE send it to hundreds of other schools. And whoever has a "bright thought" in this line, or can find one, please write it out at once and send it forth to these waiting little ones. Several of our young helpers have been asking what to write; these two wants will help to answer the question.

The Brahmin and the Bible.

A Brahmin, at the dedication of a reading-room at Madnapilly, India, gave the following significant testimony to the Bible: "Now, what is it makes him, the missionary, do all this for us? *It is his Bible.* I've looked into it a good deal at one time and another, in the different languages I chance to know. It is just the same in all languages. The Bible — there is nothing to compare with it, in all our sacred books, for goodness, and purity, and holiness, and love, and for motives of action. Where did the English-speaking people get all their intelligence, and energy, and cleverness, and power? It is their Bible that gives it to them. Of one thing I am convinced: Do what we will — oppose it as we may — it is the Christian's Bible that will, sooner or later, work the regeneration of this land."

The Sunday School and Temperance.

We are thankful that so much attention is now given to the formation of Temperance Bands and Societies in connection with our Sunday Schools. Youth is the time to enlist the heart and soul in the work of temperance. Most of the hard drinkers who have made themselves and others miserable, have been led into the temptation to use strong drinks in their early days. Every Christian Sunday School ought to be a nursery of temperance, a place where the doctrine of total abstinence from all that can intoxicate is taught by minister, superintendent and every teacher in the school. If we would have the rising generations saved from one of the greatest scourges of humanity, here is one way in which we may make a grand contribution to such a desirable blessing.

The Shepherd Boy's Prayer.

That was a good thought of the simple shepherd boy who was heard in the hill-pasture, away from the village, repeating the alphabet. "Why do you do this?" said one who heard him. His answer was, "I cannot say a prayer; I do not go to school, and nobody teaches me to pray, and I do not know fine words; but I have learned that God is good and very kind. And so I think that he will hear, and make himself a prayer out of my A B C. They pray to God down there; and though I cannot be in the church, I should like to join in prayer." How many who know the alphabet, and most of the words it makes, pray more sincerely than this?

A Good Deed.

Some of the little folks in Lowell did a praiseworthy act not long ago. The primary school children on School, near Pawtucket Street, decided not to spend all their money for fire-crackers to burn on the 4th of July; but thoughtfully considered the case of one of their number — a young miss of eleven years of age — who, in consequence of a spinal weakness, was unable to walk. With the assistance of a few other friends, they procured a velocimain (in which the little miss can propel herself) and in a few days after the 4th it was presented to her. That was an easy way of purchasing happiness as well as of doing good.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON XLVIII.

THE WALKING ON THE SEA.

"Thou standest by faith."

SCRIPTURE, — Matt. xiv. 22–33; Mark vi. 45–56; John vi. 15–21.

Question. — After Jesus had wrought the miracle of feeding the five thousand, what did the people intend to do?

Answer. — John vi. 15.

NOTE. The Jews expected the Christ would be their king. And they were intending to make him king because of the worldly plenty and power they believed he would bring.

Q. — What did Jesus do when he saw that they intended to force him to be their king?

A. — John vi. 15.

Q. — What did he go into the mountain for?

A. — Matt. xiv. 23.

Q. — What did the disciples do after Jesus had left them?

A. — John vi. 16, 17.

Q. — What happened after they had set sail?

A. — John vi. 18.

Q. — In what direction was the wind?

A. — Mark vi. 48.

Q. — How far had they rowed before Jesus came to them on the sea?

A. — John vi. 19.

Q. — At what time of the night did Jesus come to them?

A. — Mark vi. 48.

NOTE. About three o'clock in the morning.

Q. — How were the disciples affected when they saw Jesus coming to them on the sea?

A. — John vi. 19.

Q. — What did Jesus say to them?

A. — John vi. 20.

Q. — What request did Peter make?

A. — Matt. xiv. 28.

Q. — What reply did Jesus make to him?

A. — Matt. xiv. 29.

Q. — What was the result to Peter?

A. — Matt. xiv. 30.

Q. — What did Jesus do?

A. — Matt. xiv. 31.

Q. — What did he say to Peter?

A. — Matt. xiv. 31.

Q. — What took place after Jesus entered the vessel?

A. — Matt. xiv. 32.

Q. — Of what did they express conviction?

A. — Matt. xiv. 33.

The Saviour has given us an example of loving men and loving God, for he fed the multitude and then went alone to pray. He waited, too, until his disciples felt the need of help before he went to them upon the sea. And he taught Peter the wide difference between self-confidence and faith. And many a time he will wait until we feel the need of him before he will help us. And he may by some severe discipline teach the nature of faith.

Enigma No. 1.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

The Royal type of a mighty king,
And his royal title, here we bring.

1. The type, a king and priest of old;
2. A holy priest of God, we're told;
3. A man who wronged his children sore;
4. What shall be known in heaven no more;
5. A title earned by mighty deeds;
6. A little word that oft misleads;
7. A fellow-traveller of St. Paul;
8. A builder of Jerusalem's wall;
9. A dream-revealer kings did call;
10. One who instructed Timothy;
11. What Jesus' "little flock" should see.

Answers.

AUGUST 5. No. 1. Tower; Rahab; Uriah; Time; Heaven. Truth.

No. 2. Amram; Balaam; Esau; Lot. Abel.

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